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IT'S BUSINESS; HUMANITY TOO COSTLY

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* **The Mine Horror at Briceville Might Have Been Averted if** *
* **"Business" Had Allowed Proper Equipment and Methods.** *

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Briceville, Tenn., Dec. 19.—

Within six months many of the widows and orphans of Cross Mountain will be homeless exiles. Other miners will come to Briceville to take the places in the rooms of the Cross Mountain mine where more than 100 men died the other day. And the widows and orphans will have to make room for them by vacating the company houses for which they paid \$5 a month rent as long as their providers lived. It is no particular individual's fault that this will be so.

It's business.

The Briceville school will probably have to shut down for a long time, because it was kept up with quarters contributed monthly by the men who worked and died in the mine. Every child in the school has been orphaned. Of course the company might, out of its own funds, support the school. But then, you see, is the company the orphans' keeper? Ethically speaking, it is. But it isn't ethics that's involved.

It's business.

One-third of the men found in the mine perished not from the shock of the explosion, but from after-damp that followed. Men died miserably in the pitch-dark caverns while groping for air and light. Sam Miller and his crew perished thus after wandering

three days.

And every one of them might have been saved had there been a permanent rescue crew of trained miners in the Coal Creek region. But such things are costly. Mines are run for profit, not for men. It's nobody's fault in particular.

It's business.

But the \$3,000 the company has had to spend for coffins would have equipped at least three rescuers.

Cross Mountain was known as a "dry" mine. The dust stood shoe-top deep. Dust has caused most of the explosion in mines. It caused this one. To keep the dust down, water is used.

Every once in a while there was sent through the mine's chambers a water car with a wide-mouthed faucet in the rear of it. When the faucet was opened the water would run only between the tracks.

The sprinkler did not possess the efficiency of an ordinary street sprinkler. The dust on the walls and on the ceilings remained unmoistened.

There has been developed elsewhere a modern system of moistening dry mines with steam or overhead spray.

But this, too, is costly. Economy is the rule.

It's business.

One inspector was employed at